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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY TO CONSIDER PARTICIPATION IN UN
PEACEKEEPING OPERATION IN LEBANON

REF: ANKARA 4357

Classified By: Charge Nancy McEldowney, reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: MFA Undersecretary Tuygan advised State Counselor Zelikow of Turkey's willingness to consider participation in a peacekeeping operation (PKO) in Lebanon following the negotiation of a ceasefire. Zelikow outlined four different organizational options, including NATO, EU, ad-hoc multilateral or a UN mission. Tuygan characterized a UN PKO as the best political option for Turkey, but supported a NATO role, particularly in the opening phase. Turkey's participation will be dependent on the size, mandate, and partnership countries, and, in exchange for a troop contribution, Turkey would expect some voice in the operational planning. Zelikow urged the GOT to publicly announce its intention to participate in the PKO under the right circumstances. Tuygan emphasized the need for progress in combating the PKK terrorist organization in Turkey to justify to the Turkish public any GOT decision to send troops to fight terrorism abroad. END SUMMARY.

HELPING THE LEBANESE HELP THEMSELVES

¶2. (C) Counselor Philip Zelikow emphasized to MFA Undersecretary (Deputy equivalent) Ali Tuygan and representatives from the MFA International Organizations, NATO and Middle East Departments and an officer from the Turkish General Staff, the US interest in Turkey's participation in a PKO in Lebanon given its western orientation and unique history in the region. Emphasizing that Lebanon must take responsibility for its territory, Zelikow listed the PKO goals identified during the Rome conference:

- facilitate the delivery of humanitarian relief
- help implement a political agreement
- support the Lebanese armed forces to restore sovereignty
- build and train Lebanese security force capabilities

Tuygan observed that Zelikow did not list implementation of UNSCR 1559 among the PKO goals and said this must be done by

the Lebanese themselves. Zelikow agreed, but underscored that the PKO would assist the Lebanese forces.

UN BLUE HELMETS WITH NATO SUPPORT

13. (C) Zelikow outlined four alternative PKO options, emphasizing that the US has not yet chosen a particular course of action and looks to Turkey and other potential participants to help make that determination. The options are:

- NATO Force: Initial force could be the NATO Rapid Response Force. This option, however, has little support outside of the US, Zelikow said.

- EU Force using Berlin Plus: This force would be slower to stand up than NATO, and possibly less effective. It could use some NATO elements, but not enough to be effective. Perhaps the US Navy could play an off-shore support role in logistics, communications and command and control. (Note: Zelikow emphasized that the US has not yet approved this idea. End Note.)

- Multinational Force: Such a force could be constructed with or without a lead nation and/or regional organizational responsibility. No one country would be expected to assume the majority of the burden. France is considering a possible lead in such a force but does not want a high-profile role.

- UN Blue Helmet Force: Lebanese PM Seniora expressed support for this option, according to Zelikow. Despite the historical difficulties faced by UN forces, the distinction between UN and other forces has begun to blur. However, given the disappointing UNIFIL experience and the current state of disarray of the Lebanese government and military, the force must be able to take care of itself. A UN PKO would require a strong mandate as a Chapter VII mission, with robust rules of engagement.

14. (C) Tuygan thanked Zelikow for opening the PKO discussion with Turkey, noting that it was the first time Turkey had been approached about such an operation. FM Gul supports deployment of a multinational force in Lebanon following a ceasefire based on a solid commitment by all parties, he said. Turkey is prepared to consider participating depending on the mandate, modalities, decision-making mechanism and the level of international support and participation. Turkey would expect to have a role in the decision-making process if it contributes troops. Zelikow agreed that there should be a relationship between troop contributions and decision-making. Regarding an EU-lead, Tuygan cautioned that because Turkey is not a member it will not be given a meaningful voice in the operation.

15. (C) A UN-led mission would be best received by the Turkish public, Tuygan stated, but agreed that the force must be credible and formidable. He noted past UN difficulties in rapidly standing up missions, and gave Turkey's support for a NATO role in both planning and security. Deputy U/S Uzumcu opined that deployment should not take more than a week to ten days to avoid further problems. Zelikow confirmed that all options remain on the table. PM Global Strategy Coordinator Smith pointed out that following the Brahimi report on UN Reform, several hybrid operations have deployed in Cote d'Ivoire and elsewhere. MFA Deputy U/S Akgunay countered that the dual UN/NATO Balkan operation UNPROFOR did not work well. IO DAS Anderson noted that past problems with "dual key" missions like UNPROFOR will be addressed in future missions, possibly to include Darfur, by sequencing NATO and UN roles. NATO could control the early phase to rapidly stand up the operation and establish infrastructure for the UN. The US is open to options that avoid the "dual key" problems, he added.

LEBANON CRITICAL TO REGIONAL STABILITY

¶6. (C) As a Muslim country, EU candidate and friend of Israel, Turkey is concerned by the unresolved problems in the Middle East and wants to contribute to the creation of a stable environment in the region, Tuygan stated. Turkey views Lebanon in the context of the Palestinian conflict, Afghanistan and Iraq. Together, those situations weaken the framework for lasting peace in the region and encourage radicals, as demonstrated by the recent calls by al Zawahiri to join the fighting in Lebanon. Turkey, said Tuygan, is dismayed by Israel's response to the attacks and surprised at its lack of success. The images on TV do not help the forces fighting the radicals and Turkey wants to prevent the extremists from gaining ground. For this reason, FM Gul called for a ceasefire as soon as possible (Note: On July 30, the MFA issued a statement calling for an immediate ceasefire. End Note.) We may face a situation in which Israel doesn't dismantle Hizbollah in Lebanon and is neither a victor nor a total loser.

¶7. (C) Tuygan stressed the need for a commitment by both sides to a ceasefire. Zelikow said the US looks to the Lebanese government to establish the conditions for a ceasefire, but welcomes input from others who have contacts and/or influence with Hizballah leader Nasrallah and can contribute ideas to constructively resolve the conflict. If Hizballah makes specific, concrete demands, for example regarding Sheba Farms, a solution might be found. It must decide if it wants to be a force for peace or chaos.

THE PKK FACTOR

¶8. (C) Tuygan said an important element in Turkey's

participation in this PKO is the status of its fight against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) at home, which has intensified during the summer months. Thousands of Turkish troops are massed in the southeast. In one recent battle alone, fifteen soldiers were killed. Turkey's potential participation in the PKO is already in the press and there will be discussion about the government's wisdom of sending troops to fight terrorists elsewhere while the government is engaged in a difficult battle against terrorists at home. Tuygan underscored that any progress in the fight against the PKK would be well-received by the Turkish public and will be taken into account in the GOT's decision on the provision of troops. He added that Turkey's recent experience with the deployment of troops to Iraq was an unhappy one that must not be repeated. (Note: Possible allusion to July 4, 2003 hooding and arrest of Turkish Special Forces in Suleymaniya

by US troops. End Note.)

¶9. (C) Zelikow responded that the US takes the PKK very seriously. The situation has been discussed at the highest levels in the USG and we are moving vigorously to address the problem. Regarding the public perception, Zelikow suggested the GOT point out that the principle of fighting terrorism at home and abroad is the same. Turkey is standing up for governments that are trying to establish order in their countries, and standing up for the same value - opposition to terrorism. This, he pointed out, would reinforce Turkey's message on the PKK.

NEXT STEPS

¶10. (C) Tuygan looked forward to further input on the parameters of a PKO force. Zelikow noted that the UN might host a meeting to discuss this but there should be additional meetings of potential troop contributors. (Note: Per reftel, we alerted Tuygan on July 29 of the proposed July 31 UN meetings. End Note.) Zelikow urged the GOT to make public its willingness to participate in a PKO under the right circumstances. Tuygan agreed that this is possible, noting that the government has already made some statements.

PARTICIPANTS

11. (U) Turkey:

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US:

Ambassador Ross Wilson
Counselor Philip Zelikow
IO DAS Gerald Anderson
PM Global Strategy Coordinator Mark Smith
Deputy Political-Military Counselor Maggie Nardi (notetaker)

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